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PARENT AND COUNSELOR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN GROUP COUNSELING, MONOGRAPH 3.

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THIS STUDY INVESTIGATED THE SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTIONS OF BOTH COUNSELORS AND COUNSELEES TO A GROUP COUNSELING EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN THE FIRST, SEVENTH, AND NINTH GRADES. THESE DATA WERE COLLECTED IN FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM 41 COUNSELORS WHO HAD CONDUCTED A TOTAL OF 120 PARENT COUNSELING GROUPS. AN ANALYSIS OF THE DATA FROM THE POST-SERIES REACTION SHEET FOR PARENTS, THE QUALITATIVE IMPRESSIONS OF CONSULTANTS, AND THE COUNSELOR REACTIONS TO SPECIFIC GROUPS CONCLUDED THAT BOTH COUNSELORS AND PARENTS PERCEIVED THEIR GROUP COUNSELING EXPERIENCES POSITIVELY. LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION IN COUNSELING GROUPS WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO MANY OF THE RESPONSES. ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY FEW PARENTS PERCEIVED CHANGES IN THEIR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR DURING COUNSELING, THOSE WHO DID PERCEIVE BEHAVIOR CHANGE PARTICIPATED IN MORE GROUP SESSIONS. RAPPORT (BEST AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GROUPS) AND GENERAL OUTCOMES WERE PERCEIVED BY COUNSELORS AS INCREASED BY MORE GROUP SESSIONS. COUNSELORS FOUND THEIR GREATEST PROBLEM TO BE STRUCTURING GROUPS AND FACILITATING THE GROUP PROCESS. NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF THE COUNSELORS INDICATED THAT EXPERIENCE IN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING HAD A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEIR PERFORMANCE AS GROUP COUNSELORS. (AO)

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GUIDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT

Parent and Counselor Perceptions of Their Participation in Group Counseling

Monograph #3

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WESTERN REGIONAL CENTER
OF THE INTERPROFESSIONAL RESEARCH
COMMISSION ON PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

CHICO STATE COLLEGE
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CG 000 242

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Particular mention should be made of each of the counselors who worked with parent groups. Their names are included on the following page and the school district in which they worked is indicated after their name.

Without the work of any of the persons mentioned above, completion of this research would have been nearly impossible. We should like to express our deepest appreciation to them all.

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Dorothy Cobb	Inglewood	Warren Rich	Azusa
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Ross Easterling	Albuquerque	Donald Sorensen	Torrance
June Foreman	Alvord	Jay Thibert	Albuquerque
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Parent and Counselor Perceptions of Their Participation in Group Counseling[1]

The data reported here are part of that which was collected in the process of carrying out a larger study. The purpose of the larger study was to test a general model for the provision of guidance services in the public schools. The major hypothesis of the model was that guidance specialists will be able to enhance learning more effectively through intervention in the learning environment of children than through direct remedial approaches to children themselves. Basic to this approach is the idea that guidance workers should actively seek out those with whom they feel they can accomplish the most, rather than waiting for students to be referred. Implicit is the assumption that the enhancement of learning, not the correction of existing difficulties, is the most effective and appropriate role for guidance specialists. More complete descriptions of this rationale are reported elsewhere (Shaw and Tuel, 1964) (Shaw and Tuel, 1966).

The total study will eventually report on several types of data. These data types include the following:

1. Degree to which parents and teachers involved themselves in the program
2. The perceptions of counselors and parents of their group counseling experiences
3. Attitudinal differences between parents and teachers who participated and parents and teachers who did not participate in group counseling
4. Evidence relating to behavior differences in the children of counseled and uncounseled parents

Each of these data types is considered to be significant. That which follows reports the subjective responses of both parent participants and those who counseled them to their group counseling experience. Such data is of real importance in determining the effectiveness and worth of such a program. Unless the percep-

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[1]This study was supported by a grant from NIMH and administered by the Interprofessional Research Commission on Pupil Personnel Services.

tions of both counselors and those counseled are positive, such an approach is doomed to failure regardless of the worthwhileness of the outcomes.

The basic purpose of the present study was to investigate the subjective perceptions of both counselors and counselees to a group counseling experience provided by the public schools for the parents of school children. An aura of mystery and anxiety surrounds this particular aspect of guidance services and a substantial mythology has been created to fill the gap left by the absence of any concrete data. This commonly accepted mythology asserts that parents brought together under the aegis of the public schools will unite in complaining about the school and therefore will accomplish nothing constructive through their participation in such a group process. Common also is the fear among public school counselors that parents attending such a session will, in spite of anything that can be done, insist upon a lecture from the expert. Concomitant with this concern is the belief that it will be difficult, if not impossible, for a typical public school guidance specialist to promote interaction among a group of parents of school children. Another part of the mystery which surrounds the utilization of group techniques in school, particularly with parents, is the belief that only the parents of seriously disturbed children will attend such meetings and/or that the content of such meetings will be primarily focused on the needs of parents whose children have the most serious difficulties. It was, at least in part, with the view to investigating some of these commonly held assumptions that the present study was undertaken.

Certain controls were exercised in carrying out this study. All participating counselors were exposed to the same pre-experimental training procedures. Parents were all invited in the same way. All parents in any particular group had children in one specific school grade. Opportunity was provided to parents to participate in identical numbers of counseling sessions. Identical evaluation devices were presented to parents and counselors in the same way and at the same period of time. Other kinds of controls proved, for purely practical reasons,

impossible to utilize. It was not, for example, possible to randomly assign parents to a counseled or uncounseled group. Most of the school systems who participated would not permit this kind of "discrimination." In addition, some of the evaluative devices utilized depend primarily on rather subjective evaluation. Apart from these shortcomings, however, it can be said that the data collected in this study were provided by real public school guidance specialists carrying out real group counseling with parents who had children who were very real to them. In short, although certain experimental controls proved impossible to contrive for this study, the results represent a very real picture of perceptions formed under realistic conditions.

Procedures

Data reported here were collected in five different school districts and are based upon the experiences of 41 counselors who conducted a total of 120 parent counseling groups among them. As used herein, the term "counselor" designates an individual who acted as a group leader. In actuality, the counselor group represented a variety of pupil personnel professionals, including counselors, school psychologists, school psychometrists, school social workers, child welfare and attendance workers, school nurses and speech therapists. This group ranged in experience from one individual who was just beginning a public school career to another who had completed 27 years in public education. On the whole, however, the group tended to be younger, and the median number of years of experience as pupil personnel specialists was five. All had at least a master's degree, most of them in psychology or educational psychology. Two held the doctorate.

Their combined experience in group counseling at the start of the project was almost nil. Twenty-nine out of the 41 did have some academic background in group process, but only one-third had had a practicum in group counseling. Only 11 out of the 41 had previous experience in group counseling with parents, and

only 4 were willing to state that they had "much" experience. There appears to be a great deal of talk but very little action with respect to the utilization of group process in the public schools (Shaw and Wursten, 1965). These figures clearly indicate that even among this select group there was relatively little practical background in the utilization of group process.

To partially counter the lack of experience in group counseling, a workshop was held prior to the beginning of any parent group counseling. This workshop served to acquaint the participants with the nature of the research with which they were involved. It also served to strengthen their background in group process.

Parent Population

The parent population was limited to the parents of children in the first, seventh and ninth grades. Such a limitation in the participating parent population was necessary due to the fact that the participating consultants all had full-time jobs in addition to their responsibilities in this project. The first, seventh, and ninth grades were chosen because they represent articulation points at which the child begins a new phase of his academic career, and parents therefore are presumed to be more interested in and concerned with the child's educational development at such points. A total of 120 different groups comprised the pool from which parent responses were obtained. Among the six districts which were involved in the study, there were a total of 16 elementary schools, 4 junior high schools, and 2 high schools.

Group Structure

All parents of children in the first, seventh, or ninth grade of cooperating schools were invited to participate in a series of small parent discussion groups. At the elementary and junior high school level parents were informed that the focus of the groups would be on the kinds of concerns that parents normally have about their growing children and about the educational development of their

children. At the ninth grade level the focus was more specifically on parental role in educational and vocational decision-making.

At the two lower academic levels parents were invited to an initial series of four sessions. At the end of the first four sessions parents were informed that those who were interested might continue for a second series of four sessions, and the same procedure was followed at the end of the second series. At the secondary level parents were initially invited for a series of seven sessions, followed by the opportunity to participate in a second series of five sessions. Thus, any parent in the first or seventh grade of a participating school might elect not to participate in parent discussion groups, or to participate in four, eight, or twelve group counseling sessions. At the high school level a parent might decide not to participate at all, or to participate in seven or twelve group meetings.

At the time parents were invited every effort was made to make it clear that they were not being invited to attend a series of lectures, but rather to participate in a discussion with other parents about <u>their</u> concerns with the development and education of their own children. This effort was not always successful, and the expectations of parents were not always met when they found that the group leader was acting as a counselor and not as a lecturer. Some parents elected to drop out upon making this discovery.

All participating counselors were carefully instructed to bend their efforts in the direction of structuring a group situation that would provide maximum opportunity for free interchange among group members. Every effort was made to bring about conditions which would maximize parental participation and which would encourage them to discuss their own interests and concerns with regard to their own children. If parents brought up matters of school policy or raised criticisms of specific school personnel, it was the consultant's role to point out that although these might be matters of pressing concern to the parents, the

focus of these particular groups was their children and the things which they as parents could do as individuals to assist their children. The training, instruction, and supervision which group counselors received, both before and during the group sessions, was both extensive and intensive and has been covered in some detail in another source (Shaw and Tuel, 1964).

Collection and Analysis of Parent and Counselor Reaction Data

At the completion of each series each participating parent who was present was asked to fill out a Post-Series Reaction Sheet. The Post-Series Reaction Sheet contained items which could be answered both objectively and subjectively. A copy of this form appears in Appendix A. Data on counselor reaction were collected at two points. It was collected first at the time that each counselor finished a group series. At that time the form called Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups was completed. A copy of this form appears in Appendix B. The second kind of counselor reaction data collected was that appearing on the form entitled Qualitative Impressions of Consultants. This data was collected following completion of <u>all</u> parent groups for the year. A copy of this form appears in Appendix C.

The form entitled Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups is comprised of seven items. The first six can be analyzed objectively, while the last question is subjective. Only data on the first six questions will be reported here. The basic purpose of this form was to elicit counselor reactions with regard to their own performance in specific groups. The six objective items reflect some of the most common concerns that group counselors often have, such as not being able to promote interaction, being the target of excessive hostility, having the group insist on a lecture presentation, and so on. Percentages are reported by district, by school level, and by series. In addition, correlations were computed between the number of people who attended the final group session and the responses of the counselors to each question on the assumption that the attendance

at the last group meeting is at least a criterion of interest and possibly one kind of criterion of success.

The second form obtained from counselors, Qualitative Impressions of Consultants, posed a much more serious problem of analysis, since it was comprised totally of open-ended questions. This meant that there was no readily available means of objective analysis at hand. This problem was clearly recognized at the time the questionnaire was developed, but the kinds of information wanted were better collected through this means than through more structured means. The problem of analysis was handled by dividing the questionnaires randomly in half and subjectively deriving response categories from one-half. The other half of the questionnaires were then analyzed, using the response categories derived from the first half. In this way it was possible to determine whether or not the response categories were appropriate and stable. It was necessary only in the case of one item to change the initially derived categories.

In categorizing responses to these questions, the response of a given counselor was counted only once even if more than one response to the same question was categorized in the same way. These responses are reported by district. It should be pointed out that only 31 of the original 41 counselors were in attendance at the meeting when these forms were filled out. All cases of absence were due to the fact that those not in attendance would not be participating in the project the following year. Some had left their jobs in current school districts; others had been shifted within their present districts, and still others had commitments for the following year which would prevent their further participation in the project. They therefore did not attend the workshop at which this form was completed.

Data on the Post-Series Reaction Sheets was furnished by parents at the time of the last group meeting in each series. This information will be reported by district, by school level, and by series. Simple percentages will be utilized

to reflect parent responses to the questionnaire.

Results

Results obtained from parents and counselors will be reported in terms of the instruments utilized to gather the data.

Results from Parents: The Post-Series Reaction Sheet

Tables 1 through 5 report parent responses to the objective sections of the Post-Series Reaction Sheet. In addition to reporting by district, by grade level, and by series, the total number of responses to each item is also indicated. Percentages are utilized in order to make comparisons among districts, academic levels, and series possible. Table 1 indicates that over 55% of participating parents responded positively to the question of whether or not parent discussion groups had proved helpful. The response is regarded as positive if it received a rating of 4 or 5 on the scale. There appear to be some meaningful differences among districts on this variable, but present data do not account for them. The small size of some samples is a factor which must be taken into account. It is also clear that parents who remain in groups for the maximum amount of time responded more favorably to their experience than parents who dropped out during the first or second series. Participation at the first, seveth, or ninth grade level does not appear to be a factor in determining the valence of parent response to their group counseling experience.

Table 2 reports the results of the opposite kind of question, namely, have their been bad or negative results from participation in the discussion groups. Again, the concensus is favorable to the counseling groups in that an overwhelming proportion of parents indicate that there were no negative results from participation in discussion groups. There does not appear to be any real variation of response from district to district (with a possible exception of District B), from series to series, nor from level to level on this particular question.

Table 3 presents responses to the question of whether or not children's behavior has changed during the time of the parent counseling groups. It is probably not clearly worded enough to assume that parents are ascribing such changes to their participation in the group, but the fact that the proportion of positive responses increases markedly from Series 1 to Series 3 does provide some grounds for assuming such a relationship. The proportion of positive responses by district is approximately equal, with the exception of District F, which tends to have a somewhat lower proportion of positive responses. There also appears to be a higher proportion of positive responses at the junior high school level than at the other two grade levels.

Table 4 indicates that nearly all parents who reported recent changes in their child's behavior perceived such change to be for the better. There are some differences among districts and levels in this regard, but the relatively low number of responses in some categories must be considered before drawing any conclusions in this regard. The difference between District A and District F may be a meaningful one.

Table 5 indicates that an overwhelming proportion of parents who participated in group counseling would recommend such experience to their friends. The high proportion of positive response does not vary meaningfully from district to district, from level to level, nor with the length of parental involvement in group counseling. Even allowing for the Hawthorne effect, it would appear that there was a substantial feeling among parents that the group counseling experience was worthwhile.

Results from Counselors: Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Following completion of each series of group meetings, each counselor completed a form which contained six questions to be answered by objective ratings. Tables 6 through 11 reflect these results. The ratings were intended to reflect counselor perceptions relative to significant aspects of the performance of each

group. Table 6 reports counselor perceptions of group rapport. If the "very good" and "excellent" ratings are considered as positive, then the proportion of positive responses does not fall below 50% in any district. There are some large differences between series on these variables, with counselors perceiving better rapport as the parents remain longer in group counseling. There were also substantial differences related to school level, with rapport being perceived as strongest at the elementary level and lowest at the high school level.

Table 7 reflects counselor perceptions of group interaction. The relationship of Table 6 to Table 7 does not appear to be strong. It seems that counselors do not take the amount of interaction among group participants into account when making decisions about group rapport. Again, however, there is a marked relationship between counselor perceptions and length of time parents remain in groups, with longer participation equated with counselor perceptions of greater interaction.

Table 8 reflects counselor perceptions of hostility in the group. These figures tend to indicate that concerns about hostility are not well founded, if the data reported in Table 9 are taken into account. There does appear to be more perceived hostility at the secondary level than at the elementary or junior high levels. There is also a clear reduction in perceived hostility from Series 1 through Series 3.

Table 9 indicates such wide variation in counselor perceptions of the direction in which hostility was focused that no generalizations are possible. It is clear that the counselors perceived criticism of school personnel to be much less as parents remained in the groups. There also is greater perceived criticism of teachers at the secondary level than at the other academic levels.

Table 10 reflects responses to a question which taps an expressed fear of many embryo group counselors, namely, that parents will insist on a lecture presentation from school personnel. Indications are that these counselors did not

perceive this to be a serious problem except in District D. The demand for a lecture approach does appear to be related to academic level, since it is markedly greater at the ninth grade level than at other grade levels.

Table 11 provides a summary of the responses of counselors to general outcomes in the group. There is some interdistrict variation on this item, and it is interesting to note that there is at least a general relationship between the positiveness of a district's self-rating on this item and the positiveness of their response to the other items on the questionnaire.

Another test of the relationship of responses to these items and other criteria is reflected in the correlations between the responses of all counselors to a specific item and the number of people who attended the final counseling session. Computation of this correlation assumes that drop-off in attendance in the group series reflects something about the rapport, hostility, etc., in the group. Correlations significant at the .01 level were found for items in Table 6, 7, and 11. Non-significant correlations were discovered for items reflected in Tables 8 and 10. Thus, counselor perceptions of rapport, interaction, and general outcome tend to be significantly related to the holding power of the group. Counselor perceptions of hostility and the degree of insistence by participants on a lecture approach are not related to group holding power.

Counselor reactions: Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

The tables related to this section reflect the reactions of the group counselors to their counseling experience as tapped at a time shortly following the completion of all responsibilities as a group leader for the year. Tables 12 through 27 report this data. Questions are all posed in open-ended fashion, because it was impossible to foresee response categories prior to collection of the actual data.

Table 12 reports the counselors' perceptions of the most difficult aspects of group process. Problems related to structuring the group and the facilitation

of the group process were most difficult from the counselor's point of view. Somewhat less important were personal concerns of the counselors, such as anxiety over their own adequacy as group counselors. The two remaining categories are essentially related to difficulties encountered in the research aspects of the project rather than to group counseling per se.

Responses to a question pertaining to the effect of previous group counseling experience were unrevealing. Results are reported in Table 13. Rather than responding with specifics, there was a tendency to generalize. Little can be gleaned from this, other than the fact that previous group counseling experience was considered to be helpful.

Interestingly enough, a similar question on the relationship between previous experience in individual counseling and their group counseling performance did provide some highly specific responses. This probably reflects the fact that the respondent group, as a whole, has had a great deal more experience in individual counseling than in group counseling and therefore did not need to respond with generalities to this question. The major positive contributions of individual counseling experience were an increased sensitivity to group members and the transfer of useable techniques. On the other side of the ledger, about one-third of those responding indicated that individual counseling experience had actually had a negative effect on their performance as group counselors. The results are summarized in Table 14.

When asked about the cumulative effects of their experience in group counseling through the current year on performance as group counselors, responses made were also fairly specific. Major changes were all in a positive direction and included better facilitation of the group process, increased self confidence, and less need for definite structure. These responses are summarized in Table 15.

Table 16 indicates counselor belief as to why parents dropped out before the first group session even met. This was a significant problem in all six parti-

cipating districts and in some schools exceeded 50% of the parents who said they would participate. The most widespread explanation among counselors is that parents said "yes" without any real commitment to attending. There is a tendency among this group of counselors to believe that some parents would feel guilty if they didn't say yes, or would say yes because they perceived some element of pressure from the school upon receiving an invitation to participate. Misunderstanding of group purpose, personal threat, and other pressing responsibilities are also seen as significant contributory factors to pre-meeting dropout.

Counselors use essentially the same reasons to explain why parents dropped out before the end of the first series of group sessions, as they did to explain why they didn't show up for the first meeting. Two new categories do enter the picture, one being recognition of an inadequate performance on the part of the counselor, and the other the fact that some individuals dropped out because of negative feelings towards other members of the group. Table 17 summarizes these results.

The opposite question, namely, why did some parents stay in the groups for relatively long periods of time, provoked very generalized kinds of responses from counselors. The vague term "personal needs" seemed to most counselors the primary explanation of why parents remained in the groups. Social needs (of parents) and concern with their children and their problems are the other two main explanations of group holding power. Desire to discuss the school does not constitute an explanation of longevity in a group except in a very minor way. These results are seen in Table 18.

Major areas of group discussion are reflected in Table 19. The major content of the group discussions included parental concerns with their children's school performance or the impact of the school on their children, problems of parent-child relationship and the normal developmental problems of children. Specific (and probably more serious) behavior problems appear as an item of con-

tent, but not to any great extent. Vocational choice and family dynamics also appear as content areas to an even lesser extent than specific behavior problems.

The fear that groups will be dominated by certain individuals is an often-expressed concern of neophyte group counselors. Table 20 reports the extent to which this group perceived such domination as occurring. Only a small proportion of responses reflect the belief that certain individuals set the topics. A completely unexpected category (No. 5) indicates that some group leaders took the responsibility of establishing the topics for their groups. It is probably some kind of compliment that they admitted this, since the groups were clearly not to be structured in this fashion by the group leader.

Table 21 indicates general agreement that the outlines given to counselors suggesting general modes of procedure, of structuring and of promoting interaction were helpful, at least at the beginning of the groups. These materials were not intended as prepared agenda, and this was clearly indicated to the consultants at the outset. They do not appear to have been utilized in this way, but did serve as a starting crutch for some counselors.

The responses reported in Table 22 were not as helpful as hoped in revealing the specific kinds of assistance which would have been helpful to these counselors. The size of the "miscellaneous" category, coupled with the small number of other kinds of responses, indicates a high degree of diversity of response. The only alternative at all useful was the first one, which indicates that more exposure to the process of group counseling in almost any form was seen as potentially helpful to the learning counselor.

Responses in Table 23 reflect the reasons why a program of parent group counseling was seen as valuable by participating consultants. Again, there was a wide variance of response. The production of better school-parent relationships is clearly the most popular response. The efficiency angle is suggested

by the first category and vague comments about the "vital influence" of the process are reflected in category 6. To the embarrassment of the Project staff, the concept that prevention might be more effective than cure was mentioned by only a single individual. This single response is masked in the miscellaneous category.

Table 24 reflects responses of group counselors to a selected question about the general value of group counseling to parents. Vague and general references to the "positive effects" of participation and greater self-understanding or understanding of children form the two most numerous categories. Interestingly enough, four responses indicated that the parent groups were either of value to parents only in a limited way or that the effects were negative.

The question relative to counselors' beliefs about the value of counseling sessions to children evoked a series of highly varied responses. Since the counselors did not have direct contact with the children, this type of response was probably predictable. Responses are summarized in Table 25. It can be seen that the "miscellaneous" category is by far the largest, indicating again a high degree of variance. Categories indicating better child-parent relationships and that parents were making more effective efforts to assist their children are the only two which appear to have any degree of stability.

Table 26 reflects responses to a question intended to elicit counselor perceptions of their own shortcomings as group counselors. As was true with the related question in Table 22, the responses were so general as to be of little help. Assistance with group "structure, dynamics and process," which covers nearly everything, was the only significant category.

Table 27 indicates that other school personnel are generally acceptant of the parent counseling groups. This question reflects an initial concern of a very high proportion of counselors and administrators, but it appears to have been for the most part without foundation, since only a small proportion of the total

number of responses reflect concern on the part of teachers relative to parent counseling.

Summary

The following conclusions appear reasonable in the light of the data presented here:

1. The large majority of parents perceived group counseling to have been helpful to them. The further a particular parent goes in the group counseling process, the more positively he is likely to view his group counseling experience. There appears to be little relationship between positiveness of parental response to group counseling and the grade level of their child.
2. The overwhelming majority of parents do not perceive that there were negative results from participation in group counseling.
3. Relatively few parents perceived changes in their children's behavior during the course of their participation in group counseling, but the percentage increased from 11 for parents who attended only 4 sessions to 17.9 for parents who attended 8 sessions and to 38.5 for parents who attended 12 sessions. Thus, there does seem to be a direct relationship between perception of change in child behavior and length of stay in counseling groups.
4. Over 95% of parents who participated indicated that they would recommend participation in a similar group to friends.
5. Counselors generally perceived rapport to be good in their respective groups. In only a tiny percentage of cases was rapport classified as poor. The longer the group remained in existence, the greater was the tendency for the counselor to perceive rapport in the group as being good or excellent. There was a relationship between school level and rapport, with rapport being perceived as best among elementary school groups and as worst among secondary parent groups.

6. There were few problems relative to the amount of interaction among group members. Generally speaking, counselors perceived interaction as being high and interaction increased appreciably as the length of time in groups increased.
7. Few counselors perceived any problem with hostility. Over 60% of all counselors indicated that there was either very little or no hostility in their groups. When hostility did appear, it was not directed necessarily at teachers or the counselor but was perceived as being directed at a variety of targets.
8. The concepts "rapport," "interaction" and "general outcomes" were significantly related to the holding power of the group. This was not true of the concepts "hostility" and "insistence on a lecture approach."
9. Most counselors did not encounter a problem with parents insisting upon a lecture from counselors. After parents had participated in more than four group sessions, this problem was practically non-existent.
10. Counselors were generally positive about the worthwhileness of outcomes of the group counseling. The degree of positiveness increased markedly as the number of group sessions increased.
11. Counselors perceived their greatest problem to be in structuring the groups and in facilitating the group process.
12. Although most counselors perceive previous experience in individual counseling to be helpful, nearly 1/3 of the counselors indicated that such experience had a negative effect on their performance as group counselors.
13. The "personal needs" of parents were seen by most counselors as being the best explanation of why parents remained in the groups.
14. The major content of group discussion centered around parental concerns with their children's school performance. This finding effectively

refutes the notion that poor teachers or matters of educational policy will become the major focus of discussion in such groups.

15. Most group counselors reported that certain individuals in the group did not dominate the group situation.

16. The group counselors involved in this particular study perceived group counseling with parents as a very valuable and positive experience for parents.

17. Only a small proportion of counselors reported any concern on the part of other school personnel about holding counseling groups for parents.

It does not seem unreasonable to conclude that both counselors and parents perceived their group counseling experiences in connection with this study in a very positive light.

References

Shaw, M. C. and Tuel, J. K., A proposed model and research design for pupil personnel services in the public schools. U.C.L.A. (mimeographed, 95 pp. + appendices) March, 1964.

Shaw, M. C. and Tuel, J. K., A focus for public school guidance programs: a model and proposal. Pers. & Guid. J., April, 1966, 824-830.

Shaw, M. C. and Wursten, Rosemary, Research on group procedures in schools: a review of the literature. Pers. & Guid. J., Sept., 1965, 27-34.

TABLE 1
Parent Response to Group Counseling

Question: Do you feel that the group discussions have been helpful to you?

Responses by District

District	Responses Counted	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very much so
A	190		.5	8.4	36.3	36.3	18.4	
B	31		.0	3.2	12.9	25.8	58.1	
C	49		2.0	8.2	34.7	32.7	22.4	
D	22		4.5	.0	36.4	31.8	27.3	
E	12		.0	8.3	16.7	25.0	50.0	
F	234		1.3	16.2	28.2	24.4	29.9	

By Series

Series							
1	349		1.4	12.0	30.1	27.5	28.9	
2	87		1.1	12.6	25.3	33.3	27.6	
3	27		.0	3.7	25.9	33.3	37.0	

By Academic Level

Grade							
1	348		.6	9.2	31.3	33.3	25.6	
7	144		1.4	19.4	25.7	21.5	31.9	
9	46		4.3	.0	43.5	28.3	23.9	

TABLE 2
Parent Response to Group Counseling

Question: Have there been bad or negative results from your participation in the group discussions?

Responses by District

District	Responses Counted	Not at all 1	2	3	4	5 Very much so
A	191	83.8	9.4	5.2	1.6	.0
B	31	77.4	9.7	.0	9.7	3.2
C	48	87.5	10.4	2.1	.0	.0
D	22	90.9	9.1	.0	.0	.0
E	12	100.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
F	235	89.8	6.8	2.1	.4	.9

By Series

Series						
1	349	88.3	7.4	2.6	1.1	.6
2	87	79.3	13.8	4.6	1.1	1.1
3	27	85.2	11.1	.0	3.7	.0

By Academic Level

Grade						
1	347	85.3	8.4	3.5	2.0	.9
7	146	90.4	7.5	2.1	.0	.0
9	46	89.1	8.7	2.2	.0	.0

TABLE 3
Parent Response to Group Counseling

Question: Have there been any recent changes in your child's behavior around home and other out-of-school situations?

Responses by District

District	Responses Counted	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very much so
A	189		40.7	22.2	21.7	12.2	3.2	
B	31		25.8	19.4	38.7	12.9	3.2	
C	48		45.8	27.1	14.6	12.5	.0	
D	22		68.2	9.1	9.1	9.1	4.5	
E	13		61.5	.0	23.1	15.4	.0	
F	229		48.9	24.9	17.0	5.2	3.9	

By Series

Series								
1	346		50.0	19.4	19.7	7.2	3.8	
2	84		39.3	26.2	16.7	13.1	4.8	
3	26		26.9	23.1	11.5	38.5	.0	

By Academic Level

Grade								
1	345		38.6	23.8	23.8	10.4	3.5	
7	141		58.2	21.3	12.1	5.7	2.8	
9	46		58.7	17.4	10.9	10.9	2.2	

TABLE 4
Parent Response to Group Counseling

Question: If you checked 3, 4, or 5 above, have these changes been for the better or worse?

Responses by District

District	Responses Counted	Better	Worse
A	66	83.3	16.7
B	15	100.0	.0
C	15	86.7	13.3
D	5	60.0	40.0
E	5	100.0	.0
F	63	96.8	3.2

By Series

Series			
1	106	90.6	9.4
2	30	83.3	16.7
3	14	92.9	7.1

By Academic Level

Grade			
1	126	88.1	11.9
7	30	100.0	.0
9	13	84.6	15.4

TABLE 5
Parent Response to Group Counseling

Question: Would you recommend participation in a similar group to friends who have children with academic problems?

Responses by District

District	Responses Counted	Yes	No
A	191	96.3	3.7
B	31	96.8	3.2
C	49	100.0	.0
D	22	90.9	9.1
E	13	100.0	.0
F	238	95.8	4.2

By Series

Series			
1	353	96.9	3.1
2	87	94.3	5.7
3	27	96.3	3.7

By Academic Level

Grade			
1	349	96.8	3.2
7	149	95.3	4.7
9	46	95.7	4.3

TABLE 6
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: How would you describe rapport in this group?

	No. of Groups	Poor	Not so good	Fair	Very good	Excellent
All Counselors	120	.8	3.3	20.0	48.3	27.5
Responses by District						
District						
A	26	.0	.0	19.2	53.8	26.9
B	11	.0	.0	18.2	63.6	18.2
C	20	.0	.0	20.0	60.0	20.0
D	9	.0	.0	44.4	44.4	11.1
E	6	.0	16.7	33.3	33.3	16.7
F	48	2.1	6.3	14.6	39.6	37.5
By Series						
Series						
1	89	1.1	4.5	22.5	47.2	24.7
2	24	.0	.0	16.7	54.2	29.2
3	7	.0	.0	.0	42.9	57.1
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	65	.0	.0	15.4	53.8	30.8
7	32	3.1	9.4	15.6	37.5	34.4
9	23	.0	4.3	39.1	47.8	8.7

Correlation between Question 1 for all counselors and number of people in final session = .241**

** = Significant at .01 level

TABLE 7
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: How much interaction was there among parents in this group?

	No. of Groups	Almost None	Very Little	A Fair Amount	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal
All Counselors	120	.8	5.8	20.0	43.3	30.0
Responses by District						
District						
A	26	.0	3.8	23.1	42.3	30.8
B	11	.0	18.2	9.1	54.5	18.2
C	20	.0	5.0	20.0	60.0	15.0
D	9	.0	.0	11.1	77.8	11.1
E	6	.0	.0	16.7	66.7	16.7
F	48	2.1	6.3	22.9	25.0	43.8
By Series						
Series						
1	89	1.1	7.9	22.5	43.8	24.7
2	24	.0	.0	16.7	45.8	37.5
3	7	.0	.0	.0	28.6	71.4
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	65	.0	6.2	16.9	41.5	35.4
7	32	3.1	6.3	28.1	28.1	34.4
9	23	.0	4.3	17.4	69.6	8.7

Correlation for all counselors between Question 2 and number of people in final group = .204**

** = Significant at .01 level

TABLE 8
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: How much hostility was expressed in this group?

	No. of Groups	Almost None	Very Little	Fair Amount	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal
All Counselors	118	31.4	31.4	25.4	9.3	2.5
Responses by District						
District						
A	26	53.8	15.4	26.9	3.8	.0
B	11	.0	54.5	36.4	9.1	.0
C	30	.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	.0
D	9	22.2	33.3	44.4	.0	.0
E	6	.0	16.7	33.3	33.3	16.7
F	46	45.7	32.6	10.9	6.5	4.3
By Series						
Series						
1	87	28.7	31.0	28.7	10.3	1.1
2	24	33.3	29.2	20.8	8.3	8.3
3	7	57.1	42.9	.0	.0	.0
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	63	33.3	30.2	27.0	7.9	1.6
7	32	43.8	34.4	9.4	9.4	3.1
9	23	8.7	30.4	43.5	13.0	4.3

Correlation for all counselors between Question 3 and number of people in final group = .029

TABLE 9
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: Was this hostility directed primarily towards self, counselor, teachers, own child, or other group members? (Answer only if answer to "How much hostility was expressed in this group" was fair amount, quite a bit, or a great deal.)

	No. of Groups	Self	Counselor	Teachers	Own Child	Other Group Members
All Counselors	38	13.2	2.6	31.6	18.4	34.2
Responses by District						
District						
A	9	.0	.0	.0	44.4	55.6
B	3	33.3	.0	66.7	.0	.0
C	11	18.2	.0	27.3	27.3	27.3
D	3	.0	.0	100.0	.0	.0
E	5	.0	.0	60.0	.0	40.0
F	7	28.6	14.3	14.3	.0	42.9
By Series						
Series						
1	29	6.9	3.4	41.4	17.2	31.0
2	7	28.6	.0	.0	14.3	57.1
3	2	50.0	.0	.0	50.0	.0
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	21	19.0	.0	19.0	28.6	33.3
7	5	20.0	20.0	.0	.0	60.0
9	12	.0	.0	66.7	8.3	25.0

TABLE 10
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: Did the group seem to insist that you talk or lecture to them?

	No. of Groups	Almost None	Very Little	Fair Amount	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal
All Counselors	119	24.4	37.0	30.3	5.9	2.5
Responses by District						
District						
A	26	19.2	42.3	30.8	.0	7.7
B	11	9.1	63.6	18.2	9.1	.0
C	19	15.8	47.4	31.6	5.3	.0
D	9	.0	22.2	44.4	33.3	.0
E	6	16.7	33.3	50.0	.0	.0
F	48	39.6	27.1	27.1	4.2	2.1
By Series						
Series						
1	89	15.7	38.2	34.8	7.9	3.4
2	23	43.5	34.8	21.7	.0	.0
3	7	71.4	28.6	.0	.0	.0
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	64	21.9	46.9	26.6	1.6	3.1
7	32	43.8	21.9	25.0	6.3	3.1
9	23	4.3	30.4	47.8	17.4	.0

Correlation for all counselors between Question 5 and number of people in final group = .006

TABLE 11
Counselor Reactions to Specific Groups

Question: What is your feeling about outcomes in this group?

	No. of Groups	Poor	Not So Good	Fair	Very Good	Excellent
All Counselors	116	.9	9.5	30.2	44.8	14.7
Responses by District						
District						
A	26	.0	11.5	34.6	38.5	15.4
B	11	.0	9.1	54.5	36.4	.0
C	18	.0	5.6	27.8	61.1	5.6
D	9	.0	11.1	55.6	33.3	.0
E	6	.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	.0
F	46	2.2	8.7	17.4	45.7	26.1
By Series						
Series						
1	86	1.2	12.8	30.2	44.2	11.6
2	23	.0	.0	39.1	43.5	17.4
3	7	.0	.0	.0	57.1	42.9
By Academic Level						
Grade						
1	63	.0	6.3	33.3	47.6	12.7
7	31	3.2	12.9	16.1	38.7	29.0
9	22	.0	13.6	40.9	45.5	.0

Correlation for all counselors between Question 6 and number of people in final group = .229**

** = Significant at .01 level

TABLE 12
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: What was the most difficult aspect of the parent counseling sessions for you?

Alternative	District A(4)	B(2)	C(5)	D(2)	F(18)	Totals
1. Problems related to structuring the group	2	1	1	2	8	14
2. Facilitating group process	2	1	2	2	10	17
3. Personal concerns of the counselor	2	1	1	2	2	8
4. Extra time necessary	2		2	2		6
5. Clerical work	1		1	2	1	5
6. Miscellaneous	2		2		3	7

TABLE 13

Question: In what ways did your previous experience in group counseling affect your performance?

1. No previous experience	1	1		1	5	8
2. Increased my confidence	1		4	1	7	13
3. Made me aware of group process	1	1	4	1	5	12
4. Miscellaneous	1		1	1	2	5

TABLE 14
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: In what ways did your previous experience in individual counseling affect your performance?

Alternative	District A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. Increased sensitivity	3		4	1	8	16
2. Provided usable techniques	2		2	1	5	10
3. Knowledge of parent and child needs	1				2	3
4. Increased my confidence			1		1	2
5. Had negative effects	2	1	1	1	4	9
6. Miscellaneous	1	1		1	4	7

TABLE 15

Question: What changes in your own performance and attitudes did you note throughout the group sessions?

1. Increased confidence	2	1	2		6	11
2. Less need for structure	2		3		4	9
3. Became better facilitator of group	4	2	5	2	8	21
4. Miscellaneous	2			1	8	11

TABLE 16

Question: Impressions as to why parents dropped out before first session.

1. Lack of real commitment	2	1	5	2	13	23
2. Parents experienced threat	3		2	1	7	13
3. Parents misunderstood purpose of groups	1	1			5	7
4. Other pressing responsibilities	2	1	1	1	6	11
5. Miscellaneous	1		3		5	9

TABLE 17
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: Impressions as to <u>why</u> parents dropped out before the end of the first series.

Alternative	District A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. Lack of real commitment	2	1	2	1	2	8
2. Group threatening to some	2	1	6		3	12
3. Misunderstanding of purpose	3	1	3	2	8	17
4. Other pressing responsibilities	3	1	2	1	7	14
5. Group composition or structure				1	2	3
6. Counselor inadequacy	1		1		3	5
7. Miscellaneous	1	2	2		6	11

TABLE 18

Question: Impressions as to <u>why</u> parents stayed for two or more series.

1. Social needs	1		2		6	9
2. Personal needs	3	1	2	1	14	21
3. Concern with children and their problems	1		3		5	9
4. Desire to discuss the school				1	3	4
5. Miscellaneous	2		2	1	7	12

TABLE 19

Question: What were the major topics brought up by parents?

1. Vocational-educational choice			2	2	1	5
2. Parent-child relationships	4	1	3		13	21
3. Family dynamics		2			2	4
4. Concerns with school	3	2	3	2	13	23
5. Specific behavior problems	2	1	3		6	12
6. Interest in normal developmental problems	3		2		13	18
7. Miscellaneous	2				2	4

TABLE 20
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: Did certain parents tend to set the topic for discussion, or was there general interest in what was discussed?

Alternative	District A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. General interest		1	1	2	9	13
2. Moved from general to individual	1					1
3. Moved from individual to general involvement		1			1	2
4. Certain parents set topics			3		2	5
5. Leader set topics	1				2	3
6. Both 1 and 4	2		1		4	7

TABLE 21

Question: Were the prepared outlines helpful?

1. Yes	2	2	4		9	17
2. Yes - as a starting crutch	1				8	9
3. Yes - but too much reliance on outlines impeded group interaction	1		1	1		3
4. Ambivalent				1	1	2

TABLE 22

Question: In what ways could your own skills in group counseling have been advanced more effectively?

1. More opportunity to observe group sessions, films, tapes, etc.	4		3	1	4	12
2. More experience				1	3	4
3. Miscellaneous, including readings	2	1	3		12	18

TABLE 23
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: What would you judge to be the value of including such a program as a regular part of a guidance program at the level on which you are working?

Alternative	District A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. Reach more people	3	1		2	2	8
2. Better relations between school and parents	1	2	2		13	18
3. Defines guidance worker's role more clearly		1			1	2
4. "Vital influence" "Valuable"	1		1		6	8
5. Helps student become better adjusted	1	1	1			3
6. Improve child-parent relations		1	2		2	5
7. Miscellaneous	2		1	1	4	8

TABLE 24

Question: What were your impressions of the general value of group sessions to participating parents?

1. Learning that many parents have similar problems	1	1	2		2	6
2. Improved approaches to handling problems			1	1	1	3
3. Created self-understanding or understanding of children	2	2	3	1	2	10
4. Created home-school rapport	2	1	1	1	2	7
5. "Positive" effect	2				12	14
6. "Limited" (or negative) effect			1		3	4
7. Miscellaneous			2		2	4

TABLE 25
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: What were your impressions of the general value of the group sessions to children of participating parents?

Alternative	District A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. Better child-parent relationships	3	1		1	2	7
2. Parents making better (or more) efforts to assist children	2		2		1	5
3. Children pleased that parents were interested in them			1		2	3
4. Increased parent-school interaction	1			1		2
5. Have no way of knowing		1			2	3
6. Miscellaneous	1		2		11	14

TABLE 26

Question: With what aspects of improving your group counseling do you need the most help?

1. Structure, dynamics and process	2		2	2	10	16
2. Assistance with problem of terminating sessions; getting closure		1	1		1	3
3. Opportunities for self-evaluation	2		1			3
4. More experience	2	2			1	5
5. Unclassifiable and miscellaneous			1		4	5

TABLE 27
Qualitative Impressions of Consultants

Question: Describe the reaction of other school personnel (teachers and administrators) to the parent counseling groups.

	District					
Alternative	A	B	C	D	F	Totals
1. General positive feeling on part of teachers and administrators	1	1	4	1	8	15
2. Administrators generally supportive	1	1	1	2	4	9
3. Teachers generally unaware; need more feedback to teachers	1	1	1	1	2	6
4. Teachers fearful of parent discussions of teaching			2		3	5
5. Miscellaneous	1				6	7

Appendix A

Parent_____

School_____

Consultant_____

Group No._____

Series No._____

POST-SERIES REACTION SHEET
(Parent)
GUIDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT
University of California at Los Angeles

For several weeks you have been participating in group discussions. We would like to know your reactions to this experience in order to plan for the future. Will you please respond frankly to the attached rating scale so that the reactions of all participants may be objectively evaluated. Should you run out of space, please feel free to continue on the back of this sheet or use additional paper.

1. Do you feel that the group discussions have been helpful to you?

Not at all* * * * * Very much so
1 2 3 4 5

1a. If you checked 3, 4, or 5 above, please explain briefly in what ways the the discussions have been helpful.

2. Have there been bad or negative results from your participation in the group discussions?

Not at all* * * * * Very much so
5 4 3 2 1

2a. If you checked 3, 2, or 1 above, please explain briefly what negative results occurred.

3. Have there been any recent changes in your child's behavior around home and other out-of-school situations?

Not at all* * * * * Very much so
1 2 3 4 5

3a. If you checked 3, 4, or 5 above, have these changes been for the better_____ (or) worse_____
Please explain briefly the nature of these changes.

4. Would you recommend participation in a similar group to friends who have children with academic problems? yes_____
no_____

5. What specific aspects of the group discussions did you find to be <u>least</u> helpful (or possibly harmful)?

6. What specific aspects of the group discussions did you find to be <u>most</u> helpful?

7. Please write here and on the back any feelings or reactions about your experience in this group which you have not had an opportunity to express above.

Appendix B

IMPORTANT! One of these forms is to be completed for each group at the conclusion of each series.

NOTE. When used for teacher group, observe substitutions in parentheses above text.

Consultant_____

District_____

School_____

Group Number_____ Parent ☐ Teacher ☐

(Circle) Series: 1 2 3

Date This Series Started:_____

COUNSELOR REACTIONS TO SPECIFIC GROUP

GUIDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT
University of California, Los Angeles

1. How would you describe rapport in this group?

(Circle one)	Poor	Not So Good	Fair	Very Good	Excellent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

(teachers)

2. How much interaction was there among parents in this group?

(Circle one)	Almost None	Very Little	A Fair Amount	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. How much hostility was expressed in this group?

(Circle one)	Almost None	Very Little	A Fair Amount	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

4. (Answer only if answer to above question was 3, 4 or 5.) Was this hostility directed primarily towards

(Circle one)	Self	Counselor	(Parents) Teachers(s)	(Own Pupils) Own Child	Other Group Members
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

5. Did the group seem to insist that you talk or lecture to them?

(Circle one)	Almost None	Very Little	A Fair Amount	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

6. What is your feeling about outcomes in this group?

(Circle one)	Poor	Not So Good	Fair	Very Good	Excellent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

7. In a short paragraph, characterize this group and put down your reactions to it. (Use back of sheet or extra paper if necessary.)

Appendix C

NAME:_____

GUIDANCE RESEARCH PROJECT
UCLA

QUALITATIVE IMPRESSIONS OF CONSULTANTS

I. Process

1. What was the most difficult aspect of the parent counseling sessions for you?

2. (a) In what ways did your previous experience in group counseling affect your performance?

(b) In what ways did your previous experience in individual counseling affect your performance?

3. What changes in your own performance and attitudes did you note throughout the group sessions?

4. Comment on the value of the supervision sessions.

(a) Frequency

(b) Intensity

(c) Comments

5. Observations on parent attrition

(a) Impressions as to <u>why</u> parents dropped out before first session.

(b) Impressions as to <u>why</u> parents dropped out before the end of the first series.

(c) Impressions as to <u>why</u> parents stayed for two or more series.

II. <u>Content</u>

1. What were the major topics brought up by parents?

2. Did certain parents tend to set the topic for discussion or was there <u>general</u> interest in what was discussed?

3. Were the prepared outlines helpful? If so, how?

4. In what ways could your own skills in group counseling have been advanced more effectively?

III. Outcomes

1. What would you judge to be the value of including such a program as a regular part of a guidance program at the level on which you worked?

2. What were your impressions of the general value of the group sessions to participating parents?

3. What were your impressions of the general value of the group sessions to children of participating parents?

IV. Miscellaneous

1. With what aspects of improving your group counseling do you need the most help?

2. Describe the reactions of other school personnel (teachers and administrators) to the parent counseling groups.